

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

JANUARY 2008

WATERFRONT RED CAR

The Waterfront Red Car expansion will likely come slowly and in increments, just a little bit at a time, said Bob Henry, executive officer to the harbor commission and the man largely responsible for launching the Red Car project drive in the late 1990s. An additional 1½-mile leg to Cabrillo Beach will probably be the next addition to the existing 1½-mile stretch along Harbor Blvd. It's all contingent on the results of a feasibility study now underway and how much the Port of Los Angeles is willing to invest in future expansion.

Bringing the vintage Red Car line up into the shopping district is especially crucial to local business owners. "It would be the best thing that could happen to downtown," said San Pedro developer Alan Johnson. A map of tentative future routes shows the Red Car running up Fifth St. several blocks to Mesa St., then looping down Seventh St. to the waterfront again.

Other possible extensions are over to the new Target store planned for North Gaffey St. and north into Wilmington to B St. and Fries Ave. The Downtown/Ports O' Call could be realigned closer to the water with a spur to Warehouse Number 1 on the main channel and an Outer Harbor/Berth 46 Spur by Cabrillo Marina. A permanent Red Car maintenance and museum building is visualized between Sixth and Seventh Sts. and Harbor Blvd.

Even if the full 9½-mile build-out of the line happens, it will likely take several years, Henry said. But the lines can be complicated to execute and would cost tens of millions of dollars. A year ago, harbor commissioners approved a three-year study to look into expanding the current waterfront Red Car line, which opened in 2003 and is used largely to serve cruise ship passengers and as a novelty ride for locals.

Wilson & Co. Inc. of Pasadena is doing the study and is expected to give an update to the commission sometime in Jan. An initial expansion could be done by 2009, Henry believes, but the rest could be as many as six years away.

[Info. from *The Daily Breeze* via Jack Whitmeyer]

SPIRIT OF WASHINGTON DINNER TRAIN

Dinner has been served for the last time on the *Spirit of Washington*, the Northwest's only year-round dinner train. It ran between Renton and Woodinville from 1992 until August 2007, when I-405 construction rerouted it to Tacoma. Increased costs on the new route combined with lower-than-expected ticket revenue brought an end when the train made its last run on October 28.

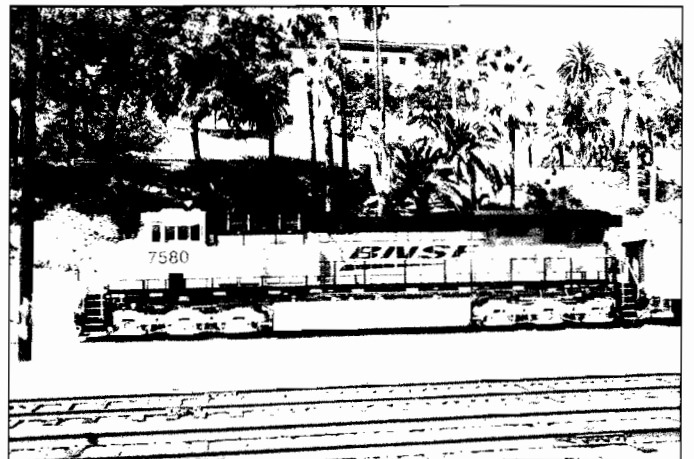
Passengers holding tickets for future rides are due a full refund. Owners are negotiating for rights on other area routes.

[Info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]



In mid-September, a nine-car business train arrived at a spur south of the Maritime Museum in San Pedro. The line up of equipment was loco BNSF 7580/Snoqualmie Pass/Cajon Pass/Trinchera Pass/Raton Pass/Topeka/Powder River/Lake Superior/Mountain View/Glacier View, a theater car.

Photo by John Whitmeyer



A sign appeared near the train, "International Trade Educational Programs." Further information indicated discussions with the Harbor Dept. concerning the proposed BNSF intermodal yard planned for Wilmington. The train cannot turn once it is in San Pedro, and must reverse movement in Wilmington, either coming or going.

Photo by John Whitmeyer



WHEEL CLICKS

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PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM is operated by Pacific Railroad Society at 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas, CA 91773. Telephone: (909) 394-0616. Museum e-mail: PRSTrainman@aol.com Open Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Wednesdays 1-5 p.m.

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PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Jan. 4 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Jan. 5, 12, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4
 19, 26 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting: 26
 Jan. 5, 12, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 19, 26 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular
 Sats. day: 5, 19; Extra day: 12, 26. Com. Meeting: 19
 Jan. 11 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room
 Fri. at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Feb. 1 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Feb. 2, 9, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4
 16, 23 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting: 23.
 Feb. 2, 9, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 16, 23 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular
 Sats. day: 2, 16; Extra day: 9, 23. Committee Mtg.: 16

Feb. 4 Exc. #534 "The Sierra in Winter" leaves on the
 Mon. 10:45 a.m. *San Joaquin* bus-train from L.A.
 Feb. 8 Exc. #534 leaves Emeryville on the 10:15 a.m.
San Joaquin train-bus for Los Angeles.
 Feb. 15 Slide Night at Saunders Yard, 7:30 p.m., Noakes &
 Fri. Herbert Sts., Commerce. Everyone welcome.

MEETING PROGRAMS

by **RUSS DAVIES**

January 11: **Railroad stations, depots and terminals, at home and abroad!** A slide presentation by **Paul Frantz** and **John Lee**. Paul and John are members of the **San Fernando Valley Historical Railroad Group**, and jointly put this presentation together. **Be there, and bring slide or digital image briefs!**

February 8: **Traction Night! Japan!** A slide presentation, all about Japanese streetcars, interurbans, and main line electric railroading. Details will follow in February *Wheel Clicks*. **Be there, and bring slide or digital image briefs!**

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by **VIRGINIA GRUPP**

There were no late renewals this month. At the Board Meeting on Dec. 7, Daniel M. Evans and David Housh were voted into PRS, with seniority numbers 512 and 513, respectively.

CHARD WALKER REMEMBERED

The BNSF Railway will name a new control point after Chard Walker, the late PRS member who spent most of his career at Summit. The new control point will be located on the Cajon Subdivision at a new crossover between main tracks 1 and 2 near mile post 60. The location is immediately west of Alray and Interstate 15.

Chard, who retired in 1983, died Sept. 28, 2007, at age 85. His book, *Chard Walker's Cajon*, was republished by Signature Press in November, 2007.

[Info. from Trains Magazine Newswire via Charles Varnes]

PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM

by **LINDSAY SMITH**

Our PRM has been growing! The staff at the Museum over this past year has discovered that the collection is like an elephant calf growing faster than we can get our arms around it. On the other hand, the Society has lost many members and the Museum has memorialized them and their contribution to rail history. In December, the Chard Walker collection arrived at the Museum. Charles Schultz and Glen Icanberry helped the family pack Chard's railroad related material. Alan Surface provided storage in Hesperia for a short time.

We have installed a new roof that will last fifty years! We combined old and new ceramic tiles. As you pass the Museum in San Dimas, take pride. The David Cameron Funds made it possible for the PRS to improve the Museum real property. In the future, Tim Muck plans to replace the termite-damaged window casements on the north side. We had to replace the south side window frames three years ago. It may seem excessive that the exterior needs paint again. The PRM has been in the depot for over 12 years. The environmentally acceptable paint ages faster than the historical petrochemical reduced materials. The City contractor painted the west wall after construction of the ramps. He painted over the plaster that was not pickled. The

lime has bled through the paint and the ramp sides do not match the older building walls. After the repair of the north side windows, we must plan to repaint the exterior of the building again.

During the past few years, we had planned to grow into the Depot area occupied by the San Dimas Historical Society. They were looking forward to moving into the Walker House because they were strong advocates for its rehabilitation. Recently the City has issued request for proposal to restaurants to occupy the main floor and manage the building and grounds. There is no suitable space on the second floor for a museum so the Historical Society is now planning to remain in the depot.

The Museum office has become the Treasurers Office. The Pacific Railroad Society financial books are on the Office Computer. Owen Danaher works as the Museum docent/greeter and as the Treasurer. Virginia Grupp visits regularly to pick up the mail related to the Membership records.

Russ Davies finished the first inventory of the late Bill Farmer's 35 mm slides. Our 35 mm slide collection is growing rapidly. Russ continues to produce programs from the Museum collection. Bill Volkmer's Blue Line construction record has been digitized and inventoried by Arie Korporaal. We still need to add the thumbnail images to the Excel/Filmaker catalog. Several more contributions have arrived. The Chard Walker collection is truly amazing. Arie has commenced making a digital record of Chard's slides and we will be proud to display his famous Summit historical records for years to come. Joe Moir is making an analysis of the late Ralph Melching negatives; Lindsay Smith is making a computer Excel listing. At this time, you can ask for a particular PE car number and we can produce a negative if we have one or more. As of today, there are over 600 lines on the computer list but there must be more than 3,000 images in the file. The Los Angeles Conservancy has published a brochure that explains the Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal (LA Union Station) to young visitors. We have assisted the author in her research; Ralph's photos are still important records.

Richard Weigle has been cleaning out his closets and has contributed more books, artifacts and magazines. Richard has retired from Amtrak and the union.

Lindsay Smith has been submitting Chard Walker's "Descanso Diary" and Bill Garner's "Exhausts from San Berdoo" columns from 1950 Wheel Clicks to the Cajon Pass Yahoo Group. *Wheel Clicks* of February 10, 1938, reports the closure of Cajon Pass by slides on February 2 near Keenbrook. Chard and other members of the Boosters were Cajon Pass railfans before they founded the society. Trainorders.com has almost daily coverage of the third track construction in the Pass.

Tom Geer is making an inventory of the recently acquired Elbert Glann collection. He has to work in the Waiting Room on the oak bench because we do not have enough space. Elbert passed away July 25, 2007, and the family brought us his books and magazines.

Bob Washburn is currently making an archive from the post cards contributed by many members. We are storing them in acid-free sleeves and Bob has a list so that we can recover the images. The sleeves provide a common dimension and the collection can be stored in archival quality boxes.

Matt Wiles has been analyzing the flat files. The oversize

images, photographs, maps, and other memorabilia in the tall flat file cabinets have produced material that we have not seen in several years. We found some material that we feared we had lost.

Mel Goyen has sold over 100 of the Blackhawk DVDs. We are still selling "For the Love of Trains" in either DVD or VHS format. We also sell "This was Pacific Electric" in DVD or VHS. We have copies of the 25th and 50th anniversary year-books for sale in the Company Store. We still have PRS lapel pins in stock. You can order Company Store items through the web site.

In December, the Museum was open for the Lighting of the San Dimas Christmas Tree in Rhodes Park. The PRS Board of Directors met in the Museum in December. It has become a tradition for the Board to meet in the Museum in December and at Saunder's Yard in June.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of October 2007, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 296,328. This was a decrease of 5 percent from the previous month.

CALTRAIN NEWS

by **MIKE GONDON**

Caltrain's Holiday Train made its annual trips down the Peninsula over the weekend of December 8-9. The train, decorated with over 40,000 lights, departed San Francisco at 4:30 p.m. on both days. On Saturday, December 8, it made stops at Broadway, Redwood City, Menlo Park, and Santa Clara. On Sunday, stops were made at San Bruno, San Mateo, California Avenue, and Sunnyvale.

The train spent about 20 minutes at each stop while Santa and his Helpers got off to greet kids and pose for pictures. A Salvation Army brass band was on board each night to lead the holiday sing-along.

The main purpose of the train is to collect toys for the Untied States Marine Corps Reserve's Toys For Tots Program and the Salvation Army. Since its inception, the Holiday Train has generated over 30,000 toys and books for Bay Area children.

With weekday ridership now approaching 40,000, Caltrain is planning to add two more trains to its evening schedule, beginning Monday, March 3. The new trains would bring the number of weekday trains to 98 and simplify the evening schedule. Trains will now leave San Francisco and San Jose Diridon every hour on the half-hour from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. The 12:01 a.m. train from San Francisco will be unchanged. The new timetable can be viewed online at www.caltrain.com/time-table.

In early December, Caltrain began construction at the Palo Alto and California Avenue stations, and on several rail bridges in Palo Alto. The \$35 million project will take a year to complete, and will improve rail capacity and safety, as well as bring both stations into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The California Avenue station is one of the few remaining "hold out" stations, where only one train at a time may occupy the platform. When construction is complete, the station will feature two outside boarding platforms with a fence between the tracks, and a pedestrian underpass for crossing between plat-

forms. Caltrain's San Antonio station has a similar design.

At the Palo Alto station, crews will modify the existing underpasses and ramps, add accessible ramps to the northern-most underpass, and replace boarding platforms with new, longer platforms.

On December 1, Caltrain ran a special train between San Francisco and Stanford Stadium for the "Big Game" between Stanford University and the University of California at Berkeley. The train, powered by engines 913 and 907, carried 10 cars and made stops only at Millbrae and Hillsdale. The Stanford Stadium station is located just south of Palo Alto, about a half mile from the actual stadium.

S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL by **DICK FINLEY** **RIDERSHIP**

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during October were 42,787. This was an increase from the previous month of about 1 percent. Metrolink weekday, systemwide, schedule adherence (within five minutes of scheduled time) was 94 percent.

NEW CARS DELAYED

Metrolink reported in November about 107 new cars being built that would feature new design and crash energy management (CEM) technology. Unfortunately, due to problems in product availability, a delay of up to six months from the earlier projection will occur. Projected delivery of the new cars has been pushed back to start in the middle of 2009.

NORTH MAIN CORONA STATION

Parking relief is coming to the North Main Corona Station. Construction of a 1,000 space parking structure at the station is scheduled to begin on Jan. 7, 2008. The west portion of the existing parking lot will be closed for the 18-month-long construction project. Visit metrolinktrains.com for more information.

METROLINK PROMOTIONS

Metrolink riders can take advantage of special discounts, and save on event tickets. For more details, go to www.metrolinktrains.com and click on "Special Events."

DYNAMIC TRACK STABILIZERS

At the Dec. 14, 2007 meeting, the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) Board authorized the procurement of two dynamic track stabilizers, which substantially increase ballast compaction in disturbed or newly constructed track segments. Undisturbed railroad track has very high stability because the repeated passage of trains compacts the individual stones of the ballast into a strong matrix.

When the ballast is disturbed due to tie replacement and track surfacing, the ballast is tamped beneath the ties to fully support the weight of trains; however the loose ballast between the ties remains unconsolidated. The SCRRA and railroad industry practice is to limit the speed of trains over recently disturbed track until a certain amount of rail traffic has consolidated the ballast. Dynamic track stabilizers are mechanical vibrators used to substantially increase ballast compaction between railroad ties, and shorten the time required for when full speed operations can resume.

SCRRA maintains 350 track miles of railroad in a shared use environment with Amtrak and freight railroads. Currently,

whenever SCRRA undertakes any track resurfacing or replacement work, a dynamic track stabilizer must be rented to quickly stabilize the track after the work is completed. This is not economical and the machine is not always available on a timely basis, especially given the large amount of upcoming track construction work.

Harsco Track Technologies submitted the lowest priced responsive and responsible bid, and was therefore recommended for award. A Base and Option Order of one machine each is being exercised for \$1,076,129.96 each.

EVENT RECORDERS

Currently, SCRRA's rail car fleet utilizes the original event recorders that were purchased from Bach-Simpson Corp. by the rail car manufacturer, Bombardier Transportation. The current locomotive fleet also utilizes the original event recorders purchased by the locomotive manufacturer EMD. Replacement event recorders are required in order to meet new federal requirements for monitoring and recording the operating parameters of SCRRA's existing locomotives and cab cars. New regulations require hardened and crash resistant memory module housings as well as additional devices to be recorded when SCRRA overhauls equipment. The 72 volt version is the same type of event recorder that SCRRA will be receiving on new locomotives and cab cars.

The SCRRA Board on Dec. 14, 2007, authorized the purchase of 70 event recorders and retrofit kits for a one-year period from Bach-Simpson Corp. for a not-to-exceed amount of \$1,134,595.77.

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by **CHARLES VARNES**

Two Californians received Amtrak 2007 President's Safety and Service Awards in October. William Bronte, Chief, Division of Rail, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and Eugene Skoropowski, Managing Director, Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) received state partner awards.

AMTRAK NEWS

New System Timetable

A new Amtrak System Timetable will become effective on Jan. 21, 2008.

In the east *Silver Service* schedules will be restructured. Tr. No. 98, the *Silver Meteor*, will depart from Miami at 8:40 a.m., 1 hr. 25 min. later. Tr. No. 92, the *Silver Star*, will depart from Miami at 11:50 a.m., 3 hrs. later. Tr. No. 89/90, the *Palmetto*, will receive minor schedule adjustments between Washington, D.C. and Savannah.

In the west the *California Zephyr's* schedules will be adjusted. Tr. No. 5, the westbound *Zephyr*, will continue to depart from Chicago at 2:00 p.m. and operate to Green River, Utah, on its current schedule. West of there the train will depart stations earlier. The new departure (and former) times are: Helper, Utah, 7:20 p.m. (7:25 p.m.); Provo, 9:26 p.m. (9:31 p.m.); Salt Lake City, 11:30 p.m. (11:35 p.m.); Elko, Nev., 3:48 a.m. (3:53 a.m.); Winnemucca, 7:10 a.m. (7:15 a.m.); Sparks, 10:10 a.m. (10:44 a.m.); Reno, 10:34 a.m. (11:28 a.m.); Truckee, Calif., 11:35 a.m. (11:29 a.m.); Colfax, 1:46 p.m. (2:46 p.m.); Roseville, 2:25 p.m. (3:49 p.m.); Sacramento, 4:23 p.m. (5:25 p.m.); Davis, 4:44 p.m. (5:56 p.m.); Martinez 5:30 p.m. (6:38 p.m.); and Emeryville 6:10 p.m. (7:25 p.m.). The schedule of Tr. No. 6, the eastbound

Zephyr, will have minimal adjustments.

The *Keystone Corridor* schedules which became effective on Dec. 3, 2007 will become permanent.

INTERCITY TRAINS

New long-distance train dining car menus were introduced on Dec. 12, 2007. The new menus are based on the upgraded menus of the *Auto Train* and the *Empire Builder*. Scrambled eggs have returned to the menu, a flat iron steak, cooked to order, and other items have been added. There will still be three national menus in rotation. Amtrak will change the menus every three months.

Tr. Nos. 48/49, the *Lake Shore Limited*, 50/51, the *Cardinal*, and 58/59, the *City of New Orleans*, are operating with a diner-lounge offering the All Day service menu.

In early November 2007, the meal policy aboard trains was changed. The change is that dining car meals will be furnished to all persons booked into sleeping car accommodations. Only passengers ticketed for the sleeping car will be furnished a meal as part of their ticket. Individuals ticketed for Coach travel must pay for their meal. The change means that any coach passengers who are befriended by sleeping car passengers who have extra bed space will have to pay for his or her own meals even though they are now in sleeping car accommodations. In order to receive complementary meals all passengers occupying sleeper accommodations must be ticketed into the room before boarding the train.

Reduced Winter Consists

During the winter reduced travel period the following trains will have cars removed from their consists.

Southwest Chief coach line nos. 0313/0414 will not operate between Jan. 7 and Feb. 15, and Jan. 9 and Feb. 17 respectively.

Coast Starlight sleeping car line nos. 1432/1132 will not operate Jan. 7 through Mar 31 and Jan.9 through Apr. 2 respectively.

Empire Builder Chicago-Seattle sleeping car line nos. 0731/0831 will not operate Jan. 3 through Mar. 31 and Jan. 5 through Apr. 2 respectively.

Capitol Limited coach line nos. 3032/2932 will not operate Jan. 7 through Feb. 15 and Jan. 9 through Feb. 17 respectively.

California Zephyr

The lead unit on the eastbound *California Zephyr* (Tr. No. 6, Nov. 14) derailed due to an ice build up in the flangeway of a grade crossing near Gretna, Neb. on Dec. 16. The remainder of the train remained on the rails. It was operating slowly on a little-used passing track at the time. No one was injured. The incident resulted in a seven-hour delay.

A major ice storm struck Iowa on Dec. 11 rendering both the BNSF railroad line and the highways impassable. The event disrupted *Zephyr* service causing Tr. No. 5 (Nov. 11) to be terminated at Galesburg, Ill., and returned to Chicago with all passengers aboard. No alternate transportation from Chicago was available. Eastbound *Zephyr*, Tr. No. 6 (Nov. 10), was terminated at Denver and turned to represent (become) Tr. No. 5 (Nov. 10) from there to Emeryville. Passengers aboard the train were housed or advised to secure their own transportation.

WESTERN CORRIDORS

Capitol

Effective Nov. 13, there was a 3% fare increase for all *Capitol*

Corridor travel.

Cascades

Due to a severe storm in the Pacific Northwest, service in the *Cascades Corridor* was suspended on Dec. 4 and Dec. 5. The *Coast Starlight* terminated at Eugene with alternate transportation only between Eugene and Portland. There was no alternate transportation between Portland and Seattle. The *Empire Builder* terminated at Wenatchee with alternate transportation between Seattle and Wenatchee. The Portland segment of the train operated normally.

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

Empire Service

The disputes and related federal court litigation over a former New York State Department of Transportation program to develop high-speed passenger rail service from New York City to Albany using RTL *Turboliner* trains from Amtrak has been resolved.

Under the terms of the settlement, Amtrak will pay New York State \$20 million. In addition, New York and Amtrak will jointly invest \$10 million in infrastructure improvement projects on the Capitol District–New York City *Empire Corridor* as approved by the New York State Senate High-Speed Rail Task Force.

One of the track improvements is planned near the George Washington Bridge and will improve service and enhance safety in this rail corridor. The work also will reduce travel times and should save New York rail passengers 2.6 million passenger-minutes per year. Currently, Amtrak operates weekday and weekend service on the *Empire Corridor*, with up to 13 departures per day, using predominantly *Amfleet* passenger rail equipment.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

EAST COAST AND BACK

by TED CREVELING

On September 30, 2007, my wife and I started a trip to the East Coast for my 65th high school reunion. We left by way of Metrolink from Covina and took the *Southwest Chief*, Train No. 4. It so happened that the PRS car, *Chippewa Creek*, left the day before on the same train, but my plans were already made and I could not change to ride with the car. We saw the *Chippewa Creek* still in the coach yard at Chicago when we arrived there.

The trip on #4 was uneventful except to say that the ride from Barstow to Flagstaff was the smoothest I had ridden in a long time. The only time I woke up was when we stopped. The roughest ride is still from La Junta to Garden City. We were 45 minutes early into Albuquerque and about the same into Kansas City. Incidentally, Amtrak has a big new parking structure there.

We arrived early in Chicago and spent time waiting there for Train No. 48, the *Lake Shore Limited*, so I had time for my favorite charbroiled hot dogs. We boarded the train at 8 p.m. and left on time at 10 p.m. A wine-tasting party was held for first class passengers before departing, as no dinner was served due to the change in departure time.

All went well until the next day when we were delayed by a freight train breakdown. This event was well documented by our train conductor over the PA system for all passengers to know the problem. I had my scanner on and his report was almost identical to that on the scanner.

It seems a westbound freight had a problem near the end of

the train while taking a siding for our train. We were stopped with a red signal waiting for the problem to clear. It was determined that a knuckle had broken and the train had come apart with the rear portion still on the main line, causing #48 to have the red signal.

It was decided that our train would pull up alongside the power units on the freight, pick up the trainman with a replacement knuckle, transport him up to the break, wait for him to repair the broken knuckle, and then take him back to his power unit. A coupler part can weigh up to 50 pounds and I am sure they appreciated our help in their not having to carry that part the length of their train. We were delayed about two hours total and the repaired freight then pulled up into the siding, letting us go on our way.

During the delay, our car attendant came by, picked up our coats and bags and told us to follow him. We ended up being put in the family room. The car was a Viewliner Sleeper and we spent the rest of the trip there, thanks to his courtesy.

The car attendant on the *Southwest Chief* was practically nonexistent. At two stops, I had to put the step stools back aboard the train myself, as we were getting ready to leave and she was nowhere around. At one stop I even had to close the door before she arrived. In Kansas City, she cursed me out for opening the window while at the station to show my wife the parking structure mentioned earlier.

We had one of the refurbished Horizon diners on the *Lake Shore* both ways. They were nicely furnished but with one glaring fault. On the walls of the car above each table, there were numbers written in black marking pencils. Probably somebody at Amtrak forgot to add the table numbers to the car the way they were supposed to be installed.

Another problem with the dinette, as they call it, was the waiting time for meals. We spent almost two hours in the car for breakfast and on the return trip two and a half hours for dinner. The car was understaffed to say the least.

I will say the food was good. I had excellent salmon. Another item of interest – the menu is entirely different from other long haul trains. There is a notation on the menu under appetizers that they are served from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. That is fine, but you have to pay for this service whether in coach or sleeper. No mention of this is on the menu anywhere. Reservations are still required for lunch and dinner.

We arrived in Albany, my Amtrak destination, about two hours late. My final destination was Milford, New Jersey, but I had made reservations to Albany to see a former shipmate on my destroyer in WW2. I learned two weeks before our departure that he had died.

Rather than change my plans I elected to stop in Albany, rent a car, and continue my trip to New Jersey driving. It worked out well as the leaves were turning and I had plenty of time. It was a drive of about 250 miles, most of it off-freeway as per my choice. We arrived in Easton, Pa. Thursday afternoon, and had an East Coast home-cooked dinner with my cousin and his wife. It was great with home-cooked roast beef, creamed yellow beans, mashed potatoes, salad and cherry pie.

The following day we visited old friends who lived in a double house by us years ago. Again a great home-cooked meal.

We then drove around my old home town with a stop at the old railroad station, Pennsy, now a restaurant, and visited some more old friends.

Saturday night was the reunion dinner of alumni for classes from 1935 to 1959, when the school was changed to an elementary school. This was my 65th reunion; my last was seven years ago. There were 63 members in my class of 1942, but only three of us at the reunion.

Sunday we went to the Bel Del train station for a ride on the steam train. The line runs down along the Delaware River and used to go to Trenton. It was originally Pennsylvania Belvedere Division but is now the Belvedere & Delaware Line. They run a steam excursion train over part of the remaining line. The locomotive was bought from the New York, Susquehanna and Western, who bought it originally from China.

I decided to see if I could get a cab ride on the steam locomotive. I went to ask the engineer while wearing my old Navy USS Halligan cap. As soon as he noticed the cap, he said he was an old destroyer man himself, and there would be no problem getting the cab ride. The ride was about two hours long.

We left after the train ride to drive back to Albany, stopping overnight in Goshen, N.Y. We left Monday morning for Albany, returned the car and waited for Train No. 49, the west-bound *Lake Shore Limited*. We had several delays again, but arrived in Chicago in time for us to get my favorite hot dogs at Union Station. We boarded the *Texas Eagle*.

Sometime during the next day, I believe we were in Arkansas, we again were held up by freight train problems. According to the scanner, the engineer on the freight had 130 pounds of air and couldn't get the brakes to release. He tried all the tricks to get them to release, complaining that there had been trouble with this particular locomotive before, and that it still had not been repaired. Finally after another two hours delay, he got them to release, and we proceeded on our way, arriving in San Antonio two hours late. However, due to the scheduled meet with Train No. 1, the *Sunset*, it didn't affect us.

The rest of the trip was uneventful unless you call getting into Los Angeles Union Station only 20 minutes late eventful. I will be looking forward to another trip in five years, if Amtrak and I are still around.

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT

by DICK FINLEY

LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL

RIDERSHIP

	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
October 2007				
Weekday Ave.	128,182	73,693	37,974	18,484
Saturday Ave.	87,470	52,126	22,495	11,482
Sunday Ave.	75,544	44,532	18,120	10,250
Monthly Total	3,600,246	2,081,572	1,035,867	512,052

RIDER SATISFACTION

A newly released survey of Metro riders indicates that satisfaction with bus and rail service has remained high – in the mid-80 percentile – for the past two years. The survey of more than 15,000 riders was conducted between May 5 and July 26, 2007. Of that number, 13,196 bus riders and 1,933 rail riders completed surveys. Satisfaction with Metro has experienced a slightly rising trend line since it stood at 81 percent in a survey conducted in the fall of 2002.

Seventy-five percent agreed that their bus or train was generally clean and only 46 percent said graffiti was a problem, down from 52 percent in spring 2004. Eighty-one percent of respondents – the majority of whom ride Metro five or more days a week – said they normally have a seat on their ride.

RED LINE WINS TOP AWARD

When the Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologist (AEG) recently presented its annual award to the Metro Red Line, one of the project's engineering leaders saw the award as vindication of the subway's design and construction.

"There are several innovative things we did way back in 1983-1984 for the Red Line, which were not considered by anybody else; that is why this project has produced something unique for the industry," said K.N. Murthy, deputy chief Capitol Management officer. Murthy was program director for the Engineering Management Consultant, which designed the subway.

AEG will present Metro with a brass plaque commemorating the Red Line as an outstanding environmental and engineering geologic project. The plaque, which will be mounted in the subway, notes that Metro "introduced an innovative seminal underground seismic structural design method." Murthy points to the subway's lack of damage from the Northridge Earthquake as further proof the subway design is valid.

The plaque will also commemorate the innovative solution to gas and water seepage: "The Red Line subway was the first to use high-density, polyethylene (plastic) to completely wrap transit stations and tunnels, thus preventing methane, hydrogen sulfide and water from entering the structures."

Also cited on the plaque will be the modular system used to build the subway, a technique Murthy said would be used if the subway is ever extended.

GOLD LINE

On Sunday, December 16, 2007, the Gold Line began providing additional service on all days of the week. Also, weekday Express Service was discontinued. On weekdays during peak periods, trains are running every 7-8 minutes with stops at all stations, and every 12 minutes mid-day. Weekend trains run every 12 minutes from mid-morning until early evening. Because the new arrangement involves the same trains and operators, no budget increase was necessary. Metro was preparing a service schedule and work assignments to support the changes.

Track improvements in the last two years have reduced any advantages brought on by the express service. According to a report by Rail Operations general manager Mike Cannell to the Metro Operations Committee, "those traveling on express trains enjoy an average time savings of approximately two minutes." While passengers using the express trains praised the additional seating and standing room that was available, "a number of the skipped stations were those adjacent to large transit and business oriented developments."

[Info. partly from *The Transit Coalition*]

METRO ACTIVIST

Metro Activist Jim Walker, who works in the Metro Library, gathers information on transportation systems and more. Walker has just published his second book about Los Angeles Rail Transportation. The latest book, *Images of Rail – Los Angeles Railway Yellow Cars*, recounts the often forgotten Yellow Car system, which ran alongside the Pacific Electric Red Car system for nearly 50 years.

The railway system ran until 1945. Walker donates the proceeds of his labor to the Metro agency.

DOWNTOWN REGIONAL CONNECTOR

[A map of the Regional Connector Transit Corridor Study Area appeared in the December 2007 issue of *Wheel Clicks*]

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority is in the early stage of planning a project that would connect the four light rail lines that will eventually traverse Downtown, creating more direct routes throughout L.A. These lines are the Gold Line from L.A. to Pasadena; the Gold Line Eastside Extension, which will continue the route through East L.A. with completion in 2009; the Blue Line, which runs between Long Beach and a station at Seventh and Flower streets; and the future Expo Line, which will also feature a Seventh and Flower stop as it stretches to Culver City.

Metro officials recently launched a study of various options for the proposed connector, including an aboveground or at-grade light rail or a subway. The study area encompasses approximately two square miles, roughly bounded by the 101 and 110 freeways, Alameda Street and Seventh or Ninth streets.

The proposal is estimated to cost between \$250 million and \$800 million, said Metro project manager Dolores Roybal, who added that no attempts have yet been made to identify funding sources. The system is likely at least 10 years away, she said.

The Downtown connector was originally conceived nearly two decades ago as an extension of the Blue Line north to Pasadena, but was abandoned in the early 1990s because of a lack of funding. Metro officials expect to produce a final report on the Downtown Connector, with preferred routing options, by July 2008, said Roybal.

If the Metro board approves the report, officials can then begin an environmental study, which could take up to three years. They would also start to look for funding at that point.

"On a very aggressive schedule," said Roybal, riders can expect the connector to be running in seven to 10 years. "It's extremely important to establish connectivity," said Diego Cardoso, a Metro executive officer and a city planning commissioner. "We're talking here about the future of Los Angeles," he said.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Downtown News* via Tom Nelson]

TRANSIT FUNDING

Southern California transit agencies said recently that state officials shortchanged them on bond money approved by voters last year. The agencies could receive up to \$1 billion less than they were expecting for improvements in the area rail and truck freight corridors.

Southern California officials noted their region handles close to 85 percent of the state's trade – mostly through the Los Angeles/Long Beach ports and the Inland Empire's warehouse distribution centers – and therefore its share of trade funds should remain close to that ratio.

Carving up \$3 billion in funds from Proposition 1B transportation bonds, the California Transportation Commission allocated between \$1.5 billion and \$1.7 billion to Los Angeles, Ventura, Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties. Area officials had hoped for \$2.55 billion.

It is still unclear to officials how the commission's decision will affect the Alameda Corridor East, a more than \$1 billion project to improve freight train transit from the ports of Los An-

geles and Long Beach and through the San Gabriel Valley and Inland Empire. The state's other transit corridors will still receive considerably less than the Los Angeles area, with San Diego securing \$250 million to \$400 million and a coalition of Bay Area and Central Valley counties receiving between \$640 million and \$840 million. The remaining \$60 million to \$80 million would go toward other areas of the state, with about \$40 million for administration costs.

But the Southland's share of the pie is still well below even the most conservative estimates based on local need versus the needs of other transit corridors, said David Yale, Metro's deputy executive officer for regional programming. Instead of receiving 85 percent, the Southland will only get between 55 and 60 percent.

Among the \$2.7 billion in projects the Southland coalition hoped to fund is the Alameda Corridor East. Officials were hoping for \$350 million for the project. The commission's determination should not affect the project's chances at securing the \$350 million, said Alameda Corridor East CEO Rick Richmond. "But the real wild card is that the state is going to be coming in with other projects (in other transit corridors) that we will have to compete with," Richmond said.

Most of the \$350 million would go to the San Gabriel trench project, which involves four below-grade crossings near the San Gabriel Mission. "Because of the proximity of the mission, lowering the railroad below grade is the best option there, but that is expensive," Richmond said.

The rest of the money would likely go to two additional crossings in either Montebello or Industry, Richmond said. Those projects would use bridges to elevate the railroad above the roadway.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

VOTE TO INSTALL GATES

The MTA Board members voted 11-1 at the meeting on Nov. 29 to take the first step toward installing 275 gates on the Red and Green Lines and at strategic light rail stations. The move would be a major cultural shift for L.A.'s rail system, which was designed to have a more open feel than those in eastern cities, with their gates, turnstiles and barriers.

But the freedom has come at a price for MTA's coffers. About 5 percent of weekday passengers on city subways, light rail lines and Orange Line buses ride without paying, costing the city about \$5.5 million annually, according to a recent MTA report. The proposed plan could bring an extra \$6.77 million annually in recovered fares and savings, according to a study.

Planners did not originally install turnstiles because they wanted to encourage ridership and reduce operating costs. But as ridership has climbed – about 7.5 million people used the Metro rail system or Orange Line busway last month – financial losses have mounted.

The system would cost up to \$30 million to install and about \$1 million a year to maintain. The gates would be installed at the stations requiring minimum renovations, and would be based on smart-card technology that would check 84 percent of passengers, according to the report.

The Green Line, which runs between Norwalk and Redondo Beach, has the highest percentage of scofflaws, nearly 6 percent on weekdays and 8 percent on Sundays, according to an October MTA study. Nearly 4.5 percent of riders on the Red Line,

which runs between Union Station downtown and North Hollywood, did not pay or paid the incorrect amount on weekdays, between 6 percent and 7 percent did so on weekends. The Gold Line has the lowest rate of fare evasion, with only 3 percent during the week, according to the study.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

GOLD LINE

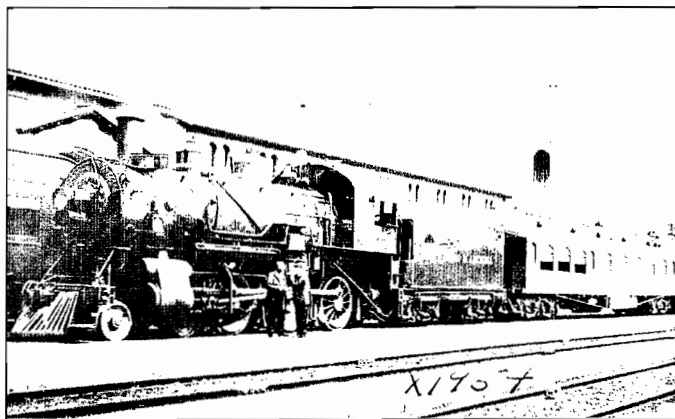
The five cities along the first phase of the planned 24-mile light rail line to Montclair – Arcadia, Monrovia, Duarte, Irwindale and Azusa – have pledged \$1 million each in writing, said Habib Balian, CEO of the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority. Six more cities along the remainder of the proposed route agreed in principal to contribute \$1 million each.

The \$11 million could be used to help fulfill a matching fund requirement that will release hundreds of millions of dollars in federal money, Balian said. Local congressional representatives inserted language in a federal transportation bill that gives the project an 80 percent grant – as long as state and local sources can make up the remaining 20 percent.

The authority and cities along the line are counting on the MTA to dole out at least some of the money it got from last year's voter-approved transportation bond. If the local and federal funds come through, officials say work on the extension could begin as early as late 2008. Environmental and preliminary planning work has been completed, and the authority already owns the entire right-of-way between Pasadena and Montclair.

"Our state of readiness is unparalleled compared to anything else the MTA has," said Balian, who added that if construction starts in 2008, the line could reach the Azusa-Glendora border by 2011.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]



Engine No. 27, which was revealed first in the Feb. 2007 issue of Wheel Clicks, is the purported "Mystery Engine" SD&AE ten-wheeler No. 27, later discussed in the April and June issues. It shows itself off in the above photo taken by the Southern Pacific at the San Diego (Santa Fe) station sometime following acquisition from the defunct Las Vegas & Tonopah Railroad.

Information by John Petros